

8 AUGUST 1958
McCORMACK SUB-COMMITTEE BRIEFING

RETURN TO

USAF Historical Archives
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7-3745 - 361

SAFLL-3/Major Brower/mr/76042/5D924/11 August 1958

Handwritten initials

Handwritten "UFO" and signature

13 AUG 1958

Director
Aerospace Studies
ATTN: Archives Branch
McConnell AFB, Abilene, Texas

RETURN TO:

INTRODUCTION FOR THE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Air Force Briefing for the Subcommittee on Atmospheric Phenomena, House Select Committee on Astronautics and Space Exploration on Unidentified Flying Objects

1. At the request of the Subcommittee Chairman, the Air Force presented a briefing at 1400 hours, 8 August 1958, to members of the Subcommittee on Air Force activities in dealing with UFO's. This presentation was made by Mr. A. F. Arcier, Scientific Advisor, Air Technical Intelligence Center and Captain George Gregory, USAF Project Officer, who presented a brief history of the Air Force actions in this field, procedures used in handling and classifying each reported observation and a statistical breakdown of all observations reported to date.

2. The Subcommittee was advised of the extensive efforts of the Air Force to apply all possible scientific methods of analysis and how this approach used in a timely fashion has reduced the number of sightings characterized as "unknown" to approximately 3 percent of the total observations. It was also stressed that the Air Force, contrary to claims of many professional UFO organizations, has not and will not suppress any evidence which would indicate that UFO's constitute a threat to the security of the United States. In addition, the Subcommittee was advised of the number of civilian organizations engaged in UFO activities has risen to a total of 60 and that the activities of these organizations and spectacular news reporting has caused the greatest problems in this field. The Subcommittee asked several questions regarding Air Force methods of categorizing various sightings as either aircraft, balloons, insufficient data, unknown, etc. and they were advised of certain specific cases which fell in these various categories.

3. Mr. Arcier and Captain Gregory presented a very well prepared briefing to the Subcommittee and were highly commended for their efforts at the close of the briefing. The Subcommittee members seemed to be definitely pleased with the Air Force approach to this problem and were apparently satisfied with our results to date. During the course of the briefing, Chairman McCormack, House Select Committee on Astronautics and Space Exploration, stressed the point that the Subcommittee was not holding formal hearings on unidentified flying objects but was merely

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obtaining evidence data for their files, which at a later date would be considered and, if desirable, utilized by the full Committee for further investigation and/or hearings. Mr. Sheldon indicated at the close of the briefing that no further witnesses would be called by the Subcommittee and that in view of the satisfactory manner in which the Air Force was dealing with this problem, it was his feeling that the Committee would take no further interest in this matter.

Signed/

W. P. FISHER
Major General, USAF
Director, Legislative Liaison

Copy to:
SAFIS (Maj. Tacker) ✓
SAFED
SAFGC
AFCE-X1 (Maj. Hynes)

12 August 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Hearings on Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO)

1. On 8 August 1958, 1400 to 1600, AFCIN presented a briefing on the Air Force UFO program to the Subcommittee on Atmospheric Phenomena, House Select Committee on Astronautics and Space Exploration (Space Committee).

2. The AFCIN UFO briefing was presented in response to a memorandum from the Director, Legislative Liaison (SAFLI) subject as above, dated 6 August 1958 (see attached memoranda).

3. Participating were:

Mr. Arcier, AFCIN-4X, principal witness

Capt Gregory, AFCIN-4E, witness

Major Best, AFCIN-4E, technical consultant (geophysicist)

Major Byrne, AFCIN-X1, staff team chief

Major Brower, SAFLI, Legislative Project Officer

Major Tacker, SAFIS, public relations consultant

4. In attendance were:

Representative McCormack, Chairman of Space Committee

Representative Natcher, Chairman of Sub-committee (By. D)

Representative Sisk, Member, (Calif. D)

Representative Keating, Member, (N.Y. R)

Representative McDonough, Member (Calif. R)

Representative Metcalf, Member (Montana, D)

Dr. Shelton, Scientific Staff Member

5. Opening remarks by Representative McCormack made it clear that the Air Force UFO program was not under investigation, rather the Committee

was seeking additional information on upper space that would be helpful to the appropriate executive agency. The hearing was in closed secret session, unrecorded, names of witnesses to be held in confidence (this cannot be guaranteed since Congressmen are apt to inadvertently publicly reference witnesses' statements).

6. Mr. Arcier as chief spokesman reviewed the ten year history of the UFO program and Captain Gregory gave a detailed explanation of the analyses techniques applied by ATIC in evaluating UFO cases. In addition, delineation of responsibility for the UFO program in the Air Force, Air Force Public Relations, and private UFO organizations, clubs, books, etc., were discussed. All questions asked were promptly and adequately answered. Throughout the hearing proper protocol was maintained, the members were polite and pleasant, and the atmosphere was well suited to an ultimate expression of confidence by the committee. Captain Gregory is to be especially commended for excellent performance; his store of related scientific data had great impact on the members.

7. The hearings, which began 7 August, will continue through the week of 11 - 15 August. Additional witnesses from public life will be called in, possibly Dr. Mendgel, Harvard, Mr. Dryden, CAS, Major Kehoe, (Ret.), National Investigative Committee on Aerial Phenomena, Captain Ruppelt, (Res.), former ATIC UFO Project Officer. AFCIN may be required to return to answer questions posed by public witnesses.

8. It is anticipated that AFCIN will benefit by the subject hearings. Due to approaching House elections, the committee members may produce a public statement of note of confidence in the Air Force, ensuring the public that the Air Force is not hiding any information on UFO's.

JAMES F. BYRNE
Major, USAF

SAFLL-3/Major Brower/m/76813/5D924/6 August 1958

File: 48-589-B

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF, INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Hearings on Unidentified Flying Objects

1. This memorandum is being written in accordance with the provisions of HOI 11-57.

2. Attached herewith is a copy of a memorandum addressed to the Under Secretary of the Air Force advising him of hearings by the Subcommittee on Atmospheric Phenomena, House Select Committee on Astronautics and Space Exploration on the subject of unidentified flying objects. These hearings will commence at 1400 hours, 7 August 1958 and will continue approximately three to four days. The Air Force has been asked to testify on 8 August 1958. All hearings will be in executive session and the Subcommittee has specifically requested that no publicity be given to the hearings.

3. It is requested that your office designate an individual to serve as Staff Team Chief for ~~these hearings~~ as required by paragraph 4a(2) of HOI 11-57. In this connection, this office has worked in the past with Major James F. Byrne (AFGIC-21). Major James Brower, extension 76813 will be the SAFLL representative.

W. P. FINGER
Major General, USAF
Director, Legislative Liaison

Copy to:
SAFED
SAFIS (Maj. Lawrence Tacker) ✓
SAFEC

SAFLL-3

SAFLL

*Just
this must be an
orientation
study!*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Hearings on Unidentified Flying Objects

1. This office has received informal notification that the Subcommittee on Atmospheric Phenomena, House Select Committee on Astronautics and Space Exploration, will commence hearings on 7 August 1958 at 1400 hours on the subject of Unidentified Flying Objects. The Air Force has been requested to suggest witnesses who can testify on this subject.

2. It is understood that these hearings will continue for approximately three to four days during which time representatives from CIA and other organizations having an interest in this matter will be called to testify. These hearings will be conducted in executive session and the Subcommittee has specifically requested that no publicity be given to the hearings.

3. I have asked Assistant Secretary Horner to assume substantive responsibility for the development and presentation of the Air Force position in this matter to the Subcommittee.

W. P. FIEBER
Major General, USAF
Director, Legislative Liaison

UFO PROGRAM

4.6

1. A brief history of the Unidentified Flying Object program would, I think, help you to understand some of its problems and determine its status.

2. The program started in 1947 when on 27 June of that year a private civilian flyer named Kenneth Arnold sighted what looked to him like several disc shaped objects near Mt. Rainier in the state of Washington. He described them as "flying saucers", a term that was forceably and with much sensationalism brought to the public's attention by the press. As a result, the Air Force was given the responsibility of investigating and analyzing such phenomena. This project was called "Project SIGN".

3. From this date, June 1947, to February 1949 when the name of the program was changed to "Project GRUDGE", approximately 375 UFO reports were collected and analyzed. In August 1949, a report on the results was submitted to the authorities. The average proportion of sightings which could not be explained, in other words unknowns, for this period was approximately 20%. It was concluded that these unknowns were due primarily to:

First, misinterpretation of conventional objects such as aircraft, balloons, astronomical bodies, also atmospheric phenomena, radar misfunctions and anomalies, etc.

Second, residual war nerves, mass suggestion and hysteria (Orson Wells case).

Third, Hoaxes and publicity seeking.

Fourth, the actions of psychopathic persons.

4. In December 1949, these findings were released to the public by the Department of Defense and were given wide publicity by the press.

5. From February 1949 to mid-1951 the project was carried on a low priority basis due to the economy policy of that time. However, in late 1951 renewed public interest and an increase in the number of sightings were reported. This increase in activity was due to the emphasis placed on UFO's by the press and publicity, and possibly due to the Ground Observer Corps program. In the summer of 1951 the project was again reviewed and "Project BLUE BOOK" established to

replace "Project GRUDGE".

6. The peak year of the UFO program was 1952 when an average of over 100 reports per month was received. This compares with 10 per month for 1951. The publicity fanfare given to the UFO controversy by the press, publishers, writers and others, reached a high pitch during 1952 and developed a tendency on the part of the public to question the Air Force's handling of the alleged "menace" presented by flying saucers. This came to a climax in late July 1952 during the much publicized Washington Flying Saucer sightings which purported to show flying saucers over the Capitol but which were in reality blips on radar scopes created by quite unusual atmospheric conditions. As a result of this, General Samford (the then Director of Intelligence) a few days after the sighting held a press conference which was televised nationally. His explanation and assurance that the UFO phenomena seen were not of interplanetary origin and did not constitute a threat to the United States were not only received with skepticism but were in fact totally rejected by a large number of writers, so called UFO experts.

7. Following this, General Samford asked the CIA to set up a panel of scientists to review the UFO program and the Air Force's handling of the situation.

3. This panel was formed; it consisted of sixteen of the most distinguished scientists and authorities in the fields of physics, radar, geophysics, atomic energy, astronomy, rockets, guided missiles, scientific and technical intelligence, propulsion and photo interpretation, in the country. Their conclusions were that UFO's (a) held no direct physical threat; (b) were not foreign developments capable of hostile acts on the United States; and (c) were not unknown phenomena requiring the revision of current scientific concepts.

Their recommendations were:

a. First, that the UFO program be de-emphasized because it interfered with the normal operation and mission of many governmental services and agencies, particularly the Air Defense Command, which was compelled to use its radar, communications, air intercept and other units in investigating the overwhelming number of sightings brought to its attention. All to the detriment of its normal mission.

b. Second, that every effort be made to strip the UFO program of its air of mystery in the mind of the public, with the view of restoring the public's confidence in the Air Force and relieving the public of quite unwarranted anxiety.

9. The correlation which exists between the type of treatment given the UFO matter by press and publishers, and the number of reports received, is important and is shown by this chart.

CHART 1 - Frequency of UFO Reports

This chart illustrates the effect of the conservative, scientific approach of Life and Look magazines on UFO reports for that period, in contrast to the newspapers' treatment of the Washington Radar "Flying Saucer" incidents and General Samford's press conference. The New Yorker's "middle-of-the-road" treatment and its effect on sightings is also interesting to note.

10. Under Project BLUE BOOK, it became apparent that if reporting, investigation and analysis procedures were improved, the percentage of unsolved sightings would decrease. Accordingly, the following procedures were adopted:

First, the 4602d Air Intelligence Services Squadron (Headquarters, Air Defense Command) (now 1006th) was directed to carry out all field investigations and preliminary evaluations of UFO sightings. This organization has units deployed throughout the U.S., and they are so highly mobile that they can arrive "on the spot" within a very short time after a UFO report is received. This

supplies the most important of all factors -- timeliness, and leaves the Air Technical Intelligence Center free to perform final analysis and evaluation.

Second, the issuance of a special directive (Air Force Regulation 200-2) which spells out details and responsibilities of Air Technical Intelligence Center, Air Defense Command and other Air Force units reporting investigation and analysis of UFO sightings. Combining spectrographic and stereo devices.

Third, the use of a special camera known as "Videon camera". This breaks down the light received from any object into its components, thus permitting the determination of the elements of which the object is composed. Seventy-five of these cameras were placed in radar stations and control towers throughout the U.S.

Fourth, the submission of all UFO data collected since 1947 to scientists in and out of the Air Force to determine whether or not a trend or pattern existed to indicate the nature or existence of the so-called flying saucers. This program was handled by the Battelle Memorial Institute.

11. These four procedures resulted in the following:

The AISS units contributed to the decrease in the number of unknowns, approximately from 10% to 3%. Next, the new regulation

greatly improved reporting and it emphasized the importance of cooperation by all Air Force units. Next, the use of Vicon cameras, while not wholly successful due to the lack of operating personnel, produced no results to indicate anything but conventional airborne objects. Finally, the Battelle effort produced Project BLUE BOOK, Report No. 14 which in October 1955 was declassified by the Secretary of the Air Force and released in summary by the Department of Defense. This study, which covered 8 years of sightings concluded that:

First, there is a total lack of evidence that these unknowns were inimical or hostile or a threat to the security of the country.

Second, there is a total lack of evidence that these unknowns were interplanetary space ships.

Third, there is a total lack of evidence that these unknowns represented technological developments or principles outside the range of our present-day scientific knowledge.

Fourth, there is a total lack of any physical or material evidence -- not a piece - scrap - or a minute fragment of these so-called "flying saucers" was ever found. It is our belief that if more immediate, detailed objective observational data could have been obtained on the "unknowns" most of these too, would have been satisfactorily explained.

You may be interested in the rise and fall of UFO reports through the years, and to see the course of the unknowns which are obviously the prime concern of the Air Force.

CHART 2 - UFO Statistics for Calendar Year 1947 to present past.

Shows the peak year 1952 and subsequent decline.

CHART 3 - UFO Evaluation by Percentage 1955-1956

12. On this chart we give the categories of our UFO evaluations, for example 1955 and 1956 by percentage. Chart 13 shows that the group which includes hoaxes, psychopaths, etc., has been cut in half, and the "unknowns" from 1% to 2.7%. This has roughly held to the present. (The group called "insufficient data" has regrettably risen from 7% to 9.9%, possibly because of increased sky watching activities - sale of telescopes have risen over 200% since Sputnik I)

13. It is apparent, as previously stated, that, as greater investigation becomes possible, as more experience in UFO investigation and analysis procedures is gained, and as better utilization of the services of scientists is made, the percentage of "unknowns" decreases.

14. At the present time, the UFO project organization, known as the "Aerial Phenomena Group," is part of the Air Sciences Division of the Air Technical Intelligence Center, Deputy for Science and Components. The project monitor is Captain Gregory and a small staff. However, as the Air Sciences Division consists primarily of scientists, such as Major Best, their services, as well as those of the engineering specialists throughout the Center, are available to the UFO project. The prime UFO scientist-consultant is Dr. Hynek, who is Professor of Astrophysics and Astronomy, Ohio State University, Secretary of the American Astronomical Society, and Director of the IGY Satellite Tracking Program. We are fortunate to have him. Other scientific personnel, outside the Air Force, are utilized on an "as needed" basis.

15. During the last two years, an increase in UFO reports has been noted. Paralleling this increase there has been a great increase in the number of private UFO organizations, books, motion pictures, and TV presentations on the subject. The advent of Sputnik undoubtedly contributed.

16. Two years or so ago, there was only a handful of these self-appointed research organizations dedicated to investigation and analysis of UFO's. As of this date, there are more than fifty such organizations

of which we have knowledge, and they are increasing monthly.

17. In early 1955, five books written on "Flying saucers" were published. To date, over 30 have been published and have received wide circulation here and abroad.

18. Up to now, six motion pictures in circulation having "Flying saucers" as their theme have been produced. One such motion picture was released in May 1956 and is still receiving some publicity. The main plot of this movie is centered around two colored film strips of so-called "flying saucers." These film strips were previously submitted to the Air Force for examination, and consist primarily of moving spots of light against a blue sky. Our conclusions were that the objects in one film were aircraft; and in the other, sea gulls. These conclusions were corroborated by an independent study made by the research organization of an aircraft manufacturer of very high standing, as well as by the CIA scientific panel which I previously mentioned.

19. With very few exceptions, both these self-appointed organizations and the books published, have been highly critical of the Air Force's handling of the UFO matter. They all exhibit a

desire to embarrass the Air Force. A number of these private organizations have written directly to President Eisenhower, to General White, to the Secretary of Defense and to important members of the Legislative Branch of Congress, requesting or demanding hearings, briefings, or discussions with UFO project officials.

20. We have written detailed letters to Senator Knowland, Senator Byrd, Senator Chase, and Representative Ross, Representative Henderson, Tollefson, to name a few, regarding aspects of the UFO program, which have been brought to their attention by so-called "UFO specialists."

21. Although these UFO organizations include sincere, well-meaning members, our experience in discussions with sponsors of such organizations has shown that any Air Force explanations or statements are either totally unacceptable or are met, at the least, with calculated skepticism. Our explanations and statements are either misinterpreted, misquoted, exaggerated or used out of context, all to the detriment of the Air Force in general, and the ACS/I in particular. I think we would be more impressed by all this were it not so profitable.

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Hearing by the "House Select Committee on Unidentified Flying Objects & Extraterrestrial Phenomena"
Subcommittee on Atmospheric Phenomena
on the Unidentified Flying Object Program
 Fri 8 Aug⁵⁸ 2PM. House of Representatives

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the imagination of the public, and, accordingly, the enthusiasm of the press. The unscrupulous have profited by it, and the publicity seekers have pursued it. Some organizers of public UFO groups have attempted to use membership in the GOC or other agencies as a means to endow their organizations with a quasi-official character, thereby increasing their appeal to the public. Some have actually obtained declassified reports from Air Force sources and reporduced them for sale. The subject is a boon to writer of sensational fiction or even popular science /and the producer of pseudo-scientific movies. Any controversy on the subject is grist to their mill. It has become a subject for humor. This is unfortunate, for it is no joke. It is costing the Government a great deal of money; it is taking the time of valuable people, time which can't be spared. It could even be a potential weapon of psychological warfare, reducing as it does the confidence of the public in the Air Force. There are many other aspects of the public participation in the UFO program and, as far as the Air Force is concerned, they are nearly all bad.

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23. ~~There are, therefore, two distinct parts to the UFO program.~~

The first is, of course, to improve operations with the object of reducing the number of "unknowns" ^{to as near zero as possible}. The second is to cope with the growing problem of public participation in the program. We feel confident that the solution of the first will greatly help in solving the second. The first problem is wholly ours and is being so handled. The number of "unknowns" is being steadily reduced although as I said before it can never reach zero because of the fact that the reporting is inevitably based on the impressions of individuals and are ~~hardly~~ ^{hardly} ever based on controlled measurements. There appears to be little difference between the usefulness of reporting by qualified trained observers such as professional ~~and~~ ^{that} pilots and those of lay observers.

24. The second problem involves matters of public relations, and the cooperation of the press; the education of the public, and of legal resources.

25. ~~I will be glad to attempt to answer your questions.~~

In conclusion,

I think

to you

Now ~~present~~ ^{present} the ~~problem~~ ^{problem} used in